

**River Valley Charter School  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Meeting # 250  
January 15, 2019 7:00 pm**

**In Attendance: Officers:** Chair: Mark Belanger, Vice Chair: Mason Mitchell-Daniels, Treasurer: Pamela Brockmeier Armstrong, Secretary: Katherine Brown **Trustees:** Nina Keery, Jennifer McCormick, Nat Coughlin, Todd Atanasoff, Alfred Link, Karina Moltz, Amber Hewett, John Siegfried, Catherine Martin

**Director:** Andy Willemsen

**Public:** Jonnie Lyn Evans

**Faculty Representative-** Jane Patterson

**Call to Order: 7:03**

**Public Comment:** none

**Acceptance of Previous Minutes:**

**Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion “To Accept Previous Minutes”**

Motion by Nat Coughlin, 2nd Amber Hewitt. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

**Director’s Report: Andy Willemsen**

Andy Willemsen updated the Board with his monthly Director’s Report (see Appendix A).

Public Montessori Convening-

RVCS had representatives from four regional schools, including The Dante Alighieri School in Boston, Mill Falls Charter School in Merrimack, NH, and Hill View Montessori Charter in Haverhill. Teachers from all schools participated in presenting best practices during the workshops. RVCS has already been in touch with these schools and others to make plans for next year’s event.

Private Foundation Support-

Second payment has been made.

Solar Panels-

Monitor in the lobby is showing real time activity. ReVision has some pre-packaged curriculum and RVCS will add to this.

Montessori Audit Report-

A few areas were identified for continued focus, including the impact of our specials schedule on the traditional work period, and RVCS will work to address these areas in the coming months. Andy Willemsen thanked Jonnie Lyn Evans and Colin Vandenburg for their assistance with this process, which included 30 or more classroom observations.

Advocacy & Outreach -

**On February 13, both Senator Diana DiZoglio and Representative James Kelcourse will visit RVCS for a tour and information session.**

## **Committee Updates-**

Accountability Committee- Notes were passed in the meeting. Alfred Link and Karina Moltz reported on the Accountability Committee meeting notes. The majority of the meeting focused on attendance and how RVCS can improve attendance rating.

Committee on Trustees-

Mason Mitchell Daniels reported the group had a meeting directly before the Board meeting and therefore, no notes for the group.

A recent webinar for Board members was viewed by the Committee on Trustees and portions may be utilized in the Board Retreat.

Director Evaluation review presented by Nat Coughlin. First draft was shared with the Board. Nat asked the Board to follow up with questions/comments via email.

Finance Committee- Pam Armstrong reported on Finance Committee notes (see Appendix B) Citizens Bank account has been closed and RVCS is now with East Boston.

Pam introduced the question of how to pay for the Edgility consultant.

**Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion "To approve modification of the 2018/2019 budget with addition of \$11,000 expense for unanticipated Board of Trustees Executive Director search advisory support - and - transfer of \$11,000 from Cash Reserves to the Operating Budget Board of Trustees line item"**

Motion by Nina Keery, 2nd Nat Coughlin. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.  
Nina Nat

Development Committee- Jennifer McCormick presented. No meeting this month. Jennifer reported that there were 30 alumni at the event last week and the 100 day fundraising event is coming up on Feb 7.

Discussion - The following question was raised by some of the Board members. Is there a negative cultural impact on the school with parents taking things for granted?

Jonnie Lyn Evans mentioned some of the appreciation letters RVCS receives. She offered to share these with the Board.

Mark Belanger asked if there were any other questions regarding the Search Committee and the consulting firm. Pam Armstrong added that we really want to be sure that all of the stakeholders have a voice in the process.

**Vote: Mark Belanger called for a Motion "To Adjourn"**

Motion by Katherine Brown, 2nd John Siegfried. Board of Directors vote to accept was unanimous.

Adjourn: 8:40

Appendix A.



## **Director's Report to the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees January 15, 2019**

### **Charter Renewal**

On January 11<sup>th</sup> we received confirmation that the Commissioner of Education intends to renew River Valley's charter without conditions. The final vote by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will occur on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, and I will inform the Board when this has taken place. This is an excellent result from the renewal process, and I commend our faculty, staff and Board for the effort involved in positioning River Valley for an unconditional renewal. The Commissioner's memorandum and the final Summary of Review from the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign are included in this month's Board packet.

### **New England Public Montessori Convening, Jan 2nd**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual New England Public Montessori Convening was again a great success. Centered upon a keynote address from Elizabeth Slade of the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, the 75 educators attending the event gave positive reviews on both the structure and content. In response to requests from last year's attendees for practical take-aways from the event, the theme of the day was Sharing Best Practices. The breakout sessions included a dozen different topics structured by grade level, and included topics ranging from Strategies for Memorization of Math Facts and Properties to best implementation of a Writer's Workshop model. We had representatives from four regional schools, including The Dante Alighieri School in Boston, Mill Falls Charter School in Merrimack, NH, and Hill View Montessori Charter in Haverhill. Teachers from all schools participated in presenting best practices during the workshops. We have already been in touch with these schools and others to make plans for next year's event.

### **Private Foundation Support**

We have received the second payment of \$50,000 for the balance of the support from the anonymous private foundation. These funds will support music, literacy, professional development, going outs, technology, Montessori materials and other needs that directly impact our educational program. I have arranged a meeting with the donor to update them on the impact of their generosity, and to confirm their commitment to continue their support for the next two fiscal years.

### **Solar Panels**

Our solar panels are live! On December 31<sup>st</sup>, National Grid connected our system to their network, and we officially flipped the switch to begin producing power. On January 11<sup>th</sup> we conducted a final walkthrough with representatives from ReVision Energy, and we are now displaying real-time power production data on the screen in the school's front lobby. Students and staff also have access to this data through a dedicated portal. We will be developing curriculum as we move forward, and will work with ReVision to create a press release for the Daily News. Many thanks to all of the Trustees and Foundation Directors who supported this effort.

### **Montessori Audit Report**

We completed the Internal Montessori Audit in December, and are just completing the official audit report this week. I will share the final report with Trustees once it's complete, which I anticipate will be prior to the January Board meeting. The results of the audit were overwhelmingly positive, with strong evidence of a high quality Montessori program being implemented throughout the school, and positive feedback from stakeholder panels. The primary tool used to measure the program was the *Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public School Sector*, a commonly used standard endorsed by The American Montessori Society. River Valley met all of the measures included in the *Essential Elements*. We identified a few areas for continued focus, including the impact of our specials schedule on the traditional work period, and will work to address these areas in the coming months. I would like to thank Jonnie Lyn Evans and Colin Vandenburg for their assistance with this process.

### **Advocacy & Outreach**

I have invited Senator Diana DiZoglio to visit RVCS. Her office representative has been in touch with me, and we are currently working to finalize a date for the Senator's visit. If possible, we will try to have Representative James Kelcourse attend the same tour and information session. I have also reached out to Newburyport Superintendent Sean Gallagher to invite him for an RVCS tour. He has indicated that he will visit within the next few weeks.

### **Progress Reports**

We conducted a brief survey of families for feedback on our new progress report format. While the responses were strongly positive, we are considering several alterations to the reports based on both parent and teachers input. Our teachers are working to bring greater clarity and consistency to their ratings of students, and we feel that with a few adjustments the reports will be of more value to families.

Appendix B.

## **River Valley Charter School Finance Committee – January 8, 2019**

Attendees:

Pam Armstrong  
Dana Lowell  
Deb McCrevan  
Stu Steinberg

Andy Willemsen

**Meeting Notes & Highlights:**

1. The committee reviewed RVCS cash balances, tuition, and projections – all is in good order.
2. Citizens Bank account is completely closed. Everything is at East Boston Savings Bank now.

**RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL  
DEVELOPMENT MEETING  
JANUARY 11, 2019**

No meeting was held during the month of January.

<b>YTD Financials, in hand</b> <i>Effortless Giving- \$4,605</i>	<b>\$76,090</b>
---	-----------------

**Annual Appeal**

- Letter went out in December, response has been marginal

**Alumni**

- Alumni event held 1/8/19 - ~30 people attended
- Young Alumni event – current 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> students with current 8<sup>th</sup> graders January 2019 date TBD

**Major Donor Events**

- School wide donor event to be held 2/7/19. Invitations will go out by end of next week. This is in celebration of 100 days and asking families to donate at least \$100

**Advocacy**

- A meeting has been organized for Senator DiZoglio, Representative Kelcourse, and Representative Mirra to visit RVCS in February.

## **Social Media**

- Increased presence on Instagram and Facebook

## **PA Collaboration**

- PA is running the 100 day event.
- PA has begun planning around 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary (next year).

## **Community Outreach - Business**

## **Next Meeting**

February 6, 2019